

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COMMISSION DIRECTIVE**

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER

☐

DATE

May 06, 2020

MOTOR CARRIER MATTER

☐

DOCKET NO.

2020-106-A

UTILITIES MATTER

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ORDER NO.

SUBJECT:

DOCKET NO. 2020-106-A - Actions in Response to COVID-19 - Staff Presents for Commission Consideration the Office of Regulatory Staff's Petition for Waiver of Communication Regulations and Amendment of Order on an Expedited Basis.

COMMISSION ACTION:

In further response to the state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of Regulatory Staff has petitioned the Commission to:

1. Waive the requirement that deferred payment plans be limited to six months and allow utilities to offer customers a longer deferred payment plan and
2. Allow utilities an additional extension to file 2019 Annual Reports.

For deferred payment plans, Commission regulations 103-352.4.c; 103-452.4.c; 103-532.5; 103-732.7; and 103-622.5 require utilities to provide for arrangements of a deferred payment plan to enable a residential customer to make installment payments where the customer is unable to pay the full balance due for utility service. To qualify, the customer must pay their current amount due and pay not less than 1/6 of the past due balance for a period not to exceed 6 months. ORS requests a waiver of the applicable regulations to allow customers the flexibility to obtain deferred payment plans longer than 6 months for past-due amounts. ORS states longer payment plans may help address the needs of customers who do not typically need deferred payment plans or assistance with utility bill payments.

Regarding 2019 Annual Reports, On March 25, 2020, the Commission issued Order No. 2020-243, granting ORS's request to allow utilities an additional 30-days to file annual reports such that those reports were due either April 30th or May 1, 2020. ORS now requests an additional 30-day extension to benefit utilities. Order No. 2020-243 and Regulations 103- 18, 103-231, 103-312, 103-412, 103-512.1, 103-612, and 103-712 address the deadlines for filing annual reports.

Mr. Chairman, I agree with ORS. The unemployment rate in South Carolina has skyrocketed with many South Carolinians out of work or working significantly reduced hours as a result of the pandemic, creating economic hardships for many ratepayers. Additionally, reduced usage from businesses is expected to impact the fixed cost recovery and revenue assumptions included in rates designed to collect the utilities' costs incurred in serving customers.

As a result, I believe more flexibility is necessary to assist utilities and their customers in mitigating the hardship many are currently facing and move, pursuant to Regulation 103-803, that we approve a temporary waiver of the Commission regulations just mentioned concerning customer payment plans and amend Order No. 2020-243 for a 30 day extension from the date of this directive, until June 5, 2020 for utilities to file annual reports.

Specifically, for those ratepayers seeking payment plans, I find and conclude that the Commission temporarily waive those regulations regarding 6 month limitation on deferred payment plans to allow

utilities more flexibility to work with customers who may be in arrears on bills during the COVID-19 time of emergency.

PRESIDING: Randall

SESSION: Regular

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

	MOTION	YES	NO	OTHER
BELSER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ERVIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
HAMILTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
HOWARD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
RANDALL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
WHITFIELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
WILLIAMS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Absent</u>

voting via videoconference

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Military Leave

(SEAL)

RECORDED BY: J. Schmieding

